



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

Christopher A. Nehring
Medical Examiner

February 10, 2020

Honorable Members of the Sheboygan County Board and County Administrator Adam Payne,

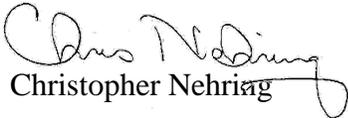
I am pleased to submit the 2019 Annual Report for the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's Department. This is my first year as Medical Examiner and I appreciate the opportunity to serve the community.

In 2019, the Department investigated and signed off on 326 death investigations, an increase of 24% over the previous year. The Department also viewed and signed 702 cremations, an increase of 4%, and ordered and completed 31 autopsies, an increase of 40%. The increased investigation work has a major impact to the Department budget.

The Medical Examiner Department is a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week operation. We do this with one part time employee and three on-call employees. The dedicated staff responds to a variety of calls in the County and trauma hospitals, outside of Sheboygan County, where County residents are transported after injury. These highly efficient employees work tirelessly to assist families and friends in processing difficult events and complete investigative work.

With the continued support of the Law Committee, County Administrator Adam Payne, and the County Board, we are able to complete our mission.

Respectfully Submitted,


Christopher Nehring

Mission Statement and Summary of Responsibilities

It is the mission of the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's Department to provide professional death investigation into the deaths reportable to the Sheboygan County Medical Examiner's Department as required by the Wisconsin State Statutes and make a determination into the cause and manner of death.

The Medical Examiner investigates deaths in Sheboygan County reportable under Wisconsin Statutes 30.67, 346.71, 350, 155, 979.01 & 979.025. A Medical Examiner investigation is required for many reason, including all homicides, suicides, deaths following an accident or injury, deaths due to poisoning, deaths following abortion, deaths involving airplanes, motor vehicle, snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle, jet skis or a boat, deaths with no physician in attendance in the past thirty days, deaths of a correctional inmate, deaths when after a reasonable time a physician cannot or will not sign the death certificate or in an emergency situation, deaths with unexplained, unusual or suspicious circumstances (including sudden unexplained death at any age), and deaths reportable under individual County Coroner policies.

The investigation process includes but is not limited to visual & physical examination of the deceased and the surroundings, the pronouncement or confirmation of the death of an individual, establishing the date and time of death, review of medication present and usage, review of medical history, identifying any recent changes in health or physical conditions, and obtaining information by speaking with family members, nursing staff and physicians, as well as neighbors, witnesses or law enforcement.

In deaths where law enforcement is involved, it is a collaborative effort of sharing investigation findings and knowledge. In some death investigations, more information is needed before a cause and manner of death can be made. An autopsy may be done and toxicology studies may be required to determine what kind and how much of a certain medication is present in a person's system. X-rays may be taken to determine if there are broken bones or if any foreign objects are present and the location. There are other tests available for specific inquiries.

Goals and Objectives Achieved in 2019

The Medical Examiner's department is fully staffed with the addition of one new member and one rehired member. Kimberly Waite, joined the staff in June 2019 and David Leffin, the former medical examiner, who retired in May 2019, joined the staff in August of 2019. Dave is the lead cremation investigator, completing the lion share of the investigations. Faye Aschenbach has achieved the 20 years milestone of investigation work in 2019, her experience and willingness to complete the mission is second to none.

Training was the primary goal for 2019. With the addition of a new staff member, in house training, as well as investigation training at Wisconsin Indian Head Technical College was provided. In state education opportunities were identified funded by a grant from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. All field staff completed toxicology certifications by the State Laboratory of Hygiene under this grant.

Budget

	2019 Budget	2019 Result	Variance
Revenues	213,131	217,668	4,537
Expenditures	-213,131	-239,407	-26,237
Results		-21,739	-21,739

The Medical Examiners budget ended 2019 with a \$21,739 negative variance due to the following factors:

- 31 autopsies ordered and performed, a 40% increase from 2018
- 326 death investigations, a 24% increase from 2018
- 702 cremation investigations, a 4% increase
- Retirement payout for an employee (vacation time)

Issues and Challenges Ahead

As the pool of Forensic Pathologist is shrinking, we continue to work with Milwaukee and Fond du Lac Counties to supplement autopsies completed in Sheboygan County. Transportation and autopsy costs, a client service, will continue to increase, and take a larger part of resources moving forward.

Goals and Objectives for 2020

For 2020, our department will focus on forensic training, investigation skills, and updating and streamlining digital storage. We will continue to identify alternate resources, grants and on line training programs as alternatives training opportunities.